

WHAT'S COOKING



TWENTY FIFTH YEAR

January 2008

NEWS LETTER

#88 -B

www.gourmetcouples.com

GOURMET COUPLES SCHEDULE FOR 2008

January 5, 2008 – 12th Night Party
January 20, 2008 – Planning Party – 4:00 – 6:00 PM
February 16, 2008 – Dinner Party
February 23, 2008 – Alternative Dinner Party
March 15, 2008 – 25th Anniversary Celebration – Army/Navy Country Club, Arlington vice Army and Navy Club Arlington.
April 6, 2008 – O Street Mansion Brunch
April 20, 2008 - Planning Party – 6:00 – 8:00 PM
May 3, 2008 – Kentucky Derby Party and Dinner
May 17, 2008 – Dinner Party
May 31, 2008 – Alternative Dinner Party
June 8, 2008 – Strawberry Brunch – Linda and Shelley
July 13, 2008 – Planning Party – 6:00 – 8:00 PM
July 27, 2008 – Restaurant - Location TBA
August 9, 2008 – Dinner Party
August 16, 2008 – Alternative Dinner Party
September 21, 2008 – Ghost & Graveyard Tour, and dinner in Alexandria
October 4, 2008 – Crab Feast – Paula & Joe
October 19, 2008 – Planning Party – 4:00 – 6:00 PM (year end planning 6:00 PM)
November 1, 2008 – Halloween Party – Mitzi and Bob
November 15, 2008 – Dinner Party
November 22, 2008 – Alternate Dinner Party
December 7, 2008 – Restaurant Brunch – Location TBA
January 3, 2009 – 12th Night Party

Artichoke Shrimp Canapés

(Prepared by Lindsay and David)
12th Night Party, January 5, 2008

Very elegant, very pretty. The shrimp must be small or the canapé will be the sort that requires a jaw that unhinges.

24 Slices French Bread - 1/2 inch thick and 2 inches in diameter
1 Sup Tartar Sauce (approximately)
12 to 15 canned Artichoke Hearts (in a water pack)
1 Pound small Shrimp - cooked shelled and deveined

Salt to taste
Freshly ground Pepper - to taste
24 Strips Pimento

- 1) Toast the French bread tightly.
- 2) Spread each slice with a generous half teaspoon of tartar sauce.
- 3) Cut artichoke hearts in 1/2-inch slices.
- 4) Place a slice on each toast and top with a shrimp.
- 5) Sprinkle lightly with salt and grind on a little pepper.
- 6) Then add a small bit of tartar sauce and a strip of pimento.
- 7) Check the solidity of your structure and if it seems teetery, secure by spearing straight down with a toothpick.

Crab Ball

(Prepared by Cheryl and Dick)
12th Night Party, January 5, 2008

1 pound backfin crab meat
1/4 cup mayonnaise
8 ounces cream cheese, chilled
Chili sauce; crackers

Gently mix crab meat and mayonnaise. Place cream cheese between double sheets of waxed paper and roll into approximately a 9-inch circle. Form crab meat into a ball and place in the center of cream cheese. Wrap cream cheese around crab meat. Place seam side down on a plate. Cover with chili sauce just before serving.

Avocado Salsa

(Prepared by Paula and Joe)
12th Night Party, January 5, 2008

A popular chunky dip that is excellent with tortilla chips.
2 Large ripe avocados
1 Small red onion, very finely chopped
1 Fresh red or green chili, seeded and very finely chopped

1/2 - 1 Garlic clove, crushed (optional)
 Finely shredded rind of 1/2 lime
 Juice of 1-1-1/2 limes
 Pinch of caster (superfine) sugar
 8 Ounces tomatoes, seeded and chopped
 2 Tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh coriander (cilantro)
 1 Teaspoon ground cumin seeds
 1 Tablespoon olive oil
 1-2 Tablespoons sour cream (optional)
 Salt and ground black pepper
 Lime wedges dipped in sea salt, and coriander (cilantro) sprigs, to garnish

Halve, stone (pit) and peel the avocados. Set half the flesh aside and coarsely mash the remainder in a bowl using a fork

COOK'S TIPS

Leaving some of the avocado in chunks adds a slightly different texture, but if you like a smoother salsa, mash all the avocado together. - Hard avocados will soften in a few seconds in a microwave. Check frequently until you get the softness that you like.

Add the onion, chili, garlic, if using, lime rind, juice of 1 lime, sugar, tomatoes and coriander Add the ground cumin, seasoning and more lime juice to taste. Stir in the olive oil.

Dice the remaining avocado and stir into the avocado salsa, then cover and leave to stand to 15 minutes so that the flavor develops Stir in the sour cream, if using. Serve immediately with lime wedges dipped in sea salt and fresh coriander sprigs. Makes 1 bowl.

Baked Brie in Puff Pastry (Baked Brie En Croute)

(Prepared by Joan and Bob)

12th Night Party, January 5, 2008

1 package puff pastry dough (In the freezer section usually by the Cool Whip and pies), defrosted in the refrigerator

1 2 pound wheel of brie, about 8" in diameter

1 egg beaten with 1 tablespoon water for "glue" and egg wash

Roll out one piece of pastry on a lightly floured board and place brie in the center. Cut pastry around brie in a circle about 2" larger than the brie. Brush the 2" edge of pastry with egg wash. Make diagonal cuts in the pastry as needed and fold the pastry up the side of the brie using additional egg wash as needed to glue the pastry to the side of the wheel of brie. Set aside. Roll out second sheet of pastry and cut in a circle about 2 " larger than the cheese. Place brie upsidedown on second pastry sheet. Brush edge with egg wash and fold up pastry using egg wash to glue the edge to the side of the pastry covered wheel of cheese. Turn brie over and place on parchment covered baking sheet (so that the raw edges of the cut pastry are on the bottom). If desired, cut decorative shapes from the scraps of dough and glue onto the top of the brie using the egg wash. Brush top and sides of brie with egg wash. At this point the brie may be refrigerated overnight or frozen for 1 month. Let brie come to

a "just cool" temperature before baking. Place in a preheated 400 degree F. oven for 35-40 minutes until golden brown. Let cool for at least 90 minutes before serving or the cheese will run out when cut open

The really fun part of this recipe is that you can add fillings to the center of the brie which taste great and are a surprise when it is cut after baking. The easiest way to cut the brie in half across the center is to get a long piece of dental floss and wind it around the wheel in the center of the cheese. Cross the ends so that the end on your right hand side is in your left hand and the end on the left hand side is in your right hand and then pull. The dental floss will slice through the cheese without making a big mess. It is easier to cut if the cheese is cold. For the filling you can add anything you like. Sautéed mushrooms, sautéed spinach with garlic, or cranberries (or blueberries) cooked with a little brandy, chopped nuts, and ginger. Almost anything that you like that is not too runny.

Chestnut Torte with Chocolate Mocha Butter Cream

(Prepared by Barbara and Jim)

12th Night Party, January 5, 2008

Chestnuts, synonymous with winter, holidays, combine with a chocolate mocha butter cream for an intensely rich dessert. Look for glazed chestnuts in specialty food shops or an Italian market.

For the Torte

6 Large eggs, separated

1-1/2 Cups sugar

1 Tablespoon vanilla extract (essence)

2 Cups chestnut puree, pushed through a sieve

1 Cup almonds, finely ground

For the Chocolate Mocha

Butter Cream:

8 Ounces (250 g) bittersweet chocolate

1/4 Cup (2 fl oz/60 ml) strong coffee

4 Egg yolks

1 Cup sugar

1/3 Cup water

1-1/2 Cups unsalted butter, cut into pieces

3 Tablespoons dark rum

For the Garnish:

whole glazed chestnuts

Reheat an oven to 350 degrees F. Butter and flour two 8-inch spring form pans.

To prepare the torte, place the egg yolks and 1 cup of the sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer, set the bowl over hot water and whisk for a few minutes until warm. Remove from the hot water and beat on high speed with the whisk attachment until the mixture is very thick and pale and a small amount trailed from the whisk forms a ribbon on the surface of the mixture, about 8 minutes. Beat in the vanilla, then fold in the chestnut puree and the ground almonds.

Beat the egg whites until soft peaks form, then gradually beat in the remaining 1/2 cup sugar until the mixture is stiff but not dry. Stir one third of the whites into the

chestnut mixture, then fold in the rest. Divide the batter between the 2 prepared pans and bake until the cakes are pale gold and pull away from the sides of the pans, about 40-50 minutes. Let cool in the pans on racks. Loosen the edges with a knife and then remove the pan sides.

To make the butter cream, combine the chocolate and coffee in the top of a double boiler and melt over simmering water. Set aside and keep warm. Place the egg yolks in the bowl of an electric mixer, set the bowl over hot water and whisk for a few minutes until warm. Remove from the hot water and beat on high speed with the whisk attachment until thick and pale.

Meanwhile, combine the sugar and water in a small saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Boil rapidly until the sugar reaches 236 degrees F on a candy thermometer. With the mixer on low speed, gradually beat the hot syrup into the beaten yolks. Fold in the chocolate mixture. Beat in the butter a little at a time. Add the dark rum. Chill until thick enough to spread.

To assemble, place 1 cake on a serving plate, frost it, then place the second cake on top. Frost the top and sides. Refrigerate until the frosting is set, then bring to room temperature for serving. Top with glazed chestnuts.

Serves 12.

Fresh Apple Cake

(Prepared by Jerry and Barbara)

12th Night Party, January 5, 2008

- 2 Cups sugar
- 1-1/2 cups vegetable oil
- 4 Large eggs
- 1 Teaspoon vanilla
- 2-1/2 Cups all purpose flour
- 2 Teaspoons baking powder
- 1 Teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 Teaspoon salt
- 3 Cups peeled and chopped apples
- 1 Cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease and flour a 12 cup fluted pan.

In a large bowl, beat sugar and oil at medium speed with an electric mixer until combined. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla.

In a medium bowl, combine flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt; sift. Gradually add to sugar mixture, beating until combined. Stir in apples and pecans.

Pour into prepared pan; bake for one hour to one hour and ten minutes, or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan and cool completely on a wire rack. Spoon warm Caramel Glaze over cake.

Caramel Glaze:

- 1-1/2 Cups firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/2 Cup butter
- 1/2 Chopped pecans
- 3 Teaspoons milk

in a small sauce pan, combine brown sugar, butter, pecans and milk. Bring to a boil over medium high heat.

Cook until temperature reaches 234 degrees F, with a candy thermometer. Stirring occasionally.

Cranberry-glazed Brie

(Prepared by Ann and Dick)

12th Night Party, January 5, 2008

A protect appetizer--or -suppressing conclusion-to a festive holiday dinner, this is a sensational coupling of contrasting tastes, colors and textures, Spread it on apple or pear slices or on crisp crackers

Cranberry Marmalade

- 3 cups cranberries
- 1/4 cup firmly packed golden brown sugar
- 1/3 cup dried currants
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/8 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/8 teaspoon ground ginger

Cheese

- 1 2.2 pound Brie cheese wheel (8-inch diameter)

Crackers , Apple slices and Pear slices

For marmalade: Combine all ingredients in heavy non aluminum saucepan. Cook over medium high heat until most of berries pop, stirring frequently, about 5 minutes. Cool mixture to room temperature. (Can be prepared 3 days ahead. Cover tightly and refrigerate.)

For cheese: Using sharp knife, cut circle in top rind of cheese, leaving 1/2 inch border of rind. Carefully remove center circle of rind from cheese. Do not cut through side rind. Place cheese in 8- inch diameter ceramic baking dish or on cookie sheet lined with foil. Spread cranberry marmalade over. (Can be prepared 6 hours ahead. Cover and chill. Bring to room temperature before continuing.) Preheat oven to 300 degrees F. Bake cheese until soft. about 12 minutes.

Set cheese on large platter. Surround with crackers and fruit slices. Let cool slightly. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Goat Cheese, Chocolate Tapenade and Dried Tomato Cups

(Prepared by Greg and Dona)

12th Night Party, January 5, 2008

- 1 Ounce dark chocolate, melted
 - 1 Cup pitted, ripe, black olives
 - 5 Anchovy filets in oil or 1 - 1-1/2 ounces anchovy paste
 - 1 Large garlic clove
 - 2 Tablespoons capers (drained)
 - 5 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 - 2 Tablespoons rum (optional)
 - 1-2 Chopped fresh chilies (optional)
 - 14 Ounces soft goat cheese
 - 15 Large cherry tomatoes
- Lemon pepper

45 Filo, cups

Lightly spread olive oil on a cookie sheet. Preheat oven to 300. Each cherry tomato should yield 3 clean slices. Place tomato slices in a single layer on the cookie sheet and lightly sprinkle with lemon pepper. Bake tomatoes in oven for 1 to 1-1/2 hours or until they are dried to your satisfaction (should be wrinkled around the edges)

Put first 8 ingredients in a food processor and pulse until everything is mixed but still has texture. Taste and adjust anchovy paste, capers, and chilies.

Let tepanade settle. Let tomatoes cool.

Into each filo cup place about 1/2 tsp goat cheese and spread around. Place a small amount of tepanade atop the goat cheese. Place one slice of dried tomato on top of each cup of cheese and tepanade. Place a dollop of goat cheese on top of that.

Lentil Pate

(Prepared by Audrey Georges and John Friedhoff)

12th Night Party, January 5, 2008

Calorie free / fat free exactly like chopped liver. Great spread salad spread especially with sliced tomato and lettuce, which can be packed separately and added at serving time.

1/4 Cup (4 ounces) dried lentils

3 Cups water

1-1/2 Tablespoon vegetable oil

1 Large onion, peeled, quartered, and sliced (2 cups)

2 Hard-boiled egg whites

10 Walnut halves, crushed (optional)

1/2 Teaspoon salt

1/4 to 1/2 Teaspoon black pepper, to taste

In a saucepan, cook the lentils in the water for 35 minutes or until they are soft. Drain and set aside. While the lentils cook, heat the oil in a large skillet and add the onion. Cook the onion over a low flame, stirring it often, until it turns a caramel color (this takes about 20 minutes). Place the lentils, onion, and remaining ingredients in a food processor or chopping bowl, and process or chop until the mixture has the consistency of pate. Yield.- about 2 cups

Serves 4 to 6.

Miniature Reubens

(Prepared by Fran and Jerry)

12th Night Party, January 5, 2008

1 Package small party rye bread

8 Slices Swiss cheese

1/2 Pound sliced corned beef

1 14.5 ounce can sauerkraut, well drained

Russian salad dressing (one-half bottle)

Heat oven to 350 degrees.

Cut each slice of cheese into 4 squares. Cut each slice of beef into 1-1/4-inch squares.

Spread a little dressing on one side of a bread slice, and place on a baking sheet. Place two pieces of corned beef on bread.

Place a small amount of sauerkraut on corned beef,

and top with a quarter-slice of cheese. Continue with remaining ingredients.

Bake at 350 degrees F, until cheese melts, about 10 minutes. Serve hot. Makes 32 servings.

Savannah Cheesecake Cookies

(Prepared by Pat and Jack)

12th Night Party, January 5, 2008

Crust:

1 Cup all-purpose flour

1/4 Cup packed light brown sugar

1 Cup chopped pecans

1 Stick butter, melted

Filling:

2 8-ounce packages cream cheese, softened

1 Cup granulated sugar

3 Eggs

1 Teaspoon pure vanilla or almond extract

Fresh berries and mint leaves, for garnish

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Combine flour, brown sugar, pecans, and butter in bowl. Press dough into an ungreased 13 by 9 by 2-inch pan. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until lightly browned.

For filling, beat cream cheese and granulated sugar together in a bowl until smooth, using a handheld electric mixer; add eggs and extract; beat well. Pour over crust. Bake for 20 minutes. Cool completely. Cut into squares before serving. Decorate tops with berries and mint leaves.

Yuletide Drops

(Prepared by Katie and Stan)

12th Night Party, January 5, 2008

1/2 Cup butter (1 stick)

1 Cup sugar

2 Eggs

1/4 Cup dairy sour cream

1-1/4 Cups sifted all-purpose flour

1/2 Teaspoon baking soda

1/2 Teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 Teaspoon salt

1/4 Teaspoon ground cloves

1 Cup quick-cooking rolled oats

1 Cup chopped pecans

1 Cup finely snipped dates

1/2 Cup raisins

1/2 Cup chopped candied cherries

Halved candied cherries (need 8 oz. cherries total)

Cream butter, sugar and eggs till fluffy. Stir in sour cream. Sift together flour, soda, cinnamon, salt & cloves; add to creamed mixture. Mix in oats, pecans, dates, raisins & chopped cherries. Drop by rounded teaspoon 2 inches apart onto lightly greased cookie sheets. Top each cookie with a halved cherry. Bake at 350 degrees F. 10-12 minutes. Makes 4 -1/2 to 5 dozen.